

HEPPNER



50¢

VOL. 118 NO. 16 8 Pages Wednesday, April 21, 1999 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Wright Chevrolet celebrates 40 years in business

This year, on March 25, 1999, Wright Chevrolet celebrated 40 years as a Chevrolet-Oldsmobile dealer in Fossil.

Following is a story by owner Herb Charles Wright about his life at Fossil, Kinzua and Heppner and the early days of the Wright Chevrolet dealership.

Born on a ranch within five miles of Fossil, August 28, 1918, I lived on ranches within six miles of Fossil until 1934, when I got a job in a family-owned saw mill six miles from our ranch. In fact, as kids, our family each year after harvest would go camping for a week at a Boy Scout camp on the exact site where Kinzua Pine Mills lumber mill would be built. The creek was full of fish and beautiful big pine trees everywhere—and these were big trees.

After working three weeks for the sawmill, they told me I was too young and I had to go home and grow older for a year and then come back. This was because of the new U.S. child labor laws. So, I went home for a year and then went back and got my job back at the same sawmill. In fact it was the only place in the area where there were any jobs to get. I was then 16 or 17 years old. I think the job paid 32 or 33 cents per hour and you worked hard and no breaks, either.

I lived in a company-owned bunk house. Lots of times after working on the night shift about 1 a.m., I would walk home about two miles, part of the walk through the woods.

After working in the sawmill factory part of the sawmill until 1941, I had a chance to move to Heppner 60 miles from Fossil where I rented a brand new Richfield service station. I was newly married and self employed. It was scary. I ran the Heppner station for just over one year. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, I could not get tires and gas because of the shortages. So, in April of 1942, the sawmill owners of Kinzua Pine Mills, called to know if I wanted to come back to Kinzua and run the service station for them. Kinzua owned many thousands of acres of prime forest land with big beautiful trees everywhere.

It was a company owned town—the houses, general store, post office, a church and the big recreation hall, which included a dance hall, restaurant, skating rink and movie theatre, which I ran for about three or four years. I ran the old projectors. The hall also had a busy saloon-bar, recreation room and a barber shop plus the only service station in town plus an eight-year school house. The town had a population of 500-600 people.

There was a lot of home-brewed



Back (left to right): H.C. Wright, Bill MacInnes, Bill MacInnes, Jr.; Front: Pat MacInnes.

beer in Kinzua. The mill owners also built a railroad spur to Condon to haul the finished product to market. They also built 40-50 miles of logging road in the forest to haul the logs into the sawmill where the logs were cut into lumber of all sizes. They dried the lumber in big steam driers and in the factory cut the dried lumber into all shapes and sizes.

After operating the service station for two or three years, I talked the owners into selling me the service station inventory, which they did. The company office let me send all the charges of the mill workers at the station for collection at no charge to me. This really made it nice. I can remember one time I sold a worker a full set of four tires installed on his car. I sent the charges through the Kinzua office for collection. After a few days, the office called me and told me the man was quitting in a few days and did not have enough money coming to pay for the tires. I got in my car, drove to where the fellow worked, found his car with the keys in it (nobody took the keys out of their cars in those days), drove his car to my station and put his old tires back on and took the car back. He never said a word to me. Nor did I see him again.

While running the Kinzua station, starting in 1954, I began buying new Ford cars and pickups wholesale from Clarence Rosewall, the Ford dealer in Heppner. I would drive to Heppner early in the morning or late in the evening and pick up the new Fords. I had to pay Mr. Rosewall when I picked up a new car or pickup. I ran the Kinzua station, working 12 to 14 hours a day, six days a week, until March 25, 1959, when I purchased Misener Motors in Fossil. They sold new Chevrolet and

Oldsmobile cars and pickups. At that time there were two other new car dealers in town plus five service stations—all in Fossil. Misener Motors was owned by a family of five men. At that time the dealership was at least 25 years old. I can remember the first new pickup sold—a four-speed with rear bumper, heat, well equipped, for about \$1,100.

Also in 1959, there were 12 new car dealers within a radius of 60 miles around the Fossil area. Now Wright Chevrolet, "The Wright Place to Buy", is the only one left. In 1958, I sold nearly as many new Fords and the Chevrolet dealer sold in Fossil, so I got the idea of buying the Fossil dealership from the Misener family. General Motors had to be convinced I could operate the dealership because I had no previous training in this type of business. I did not have enough education (eight years), not enough car dealer background and hardly enough money to assure I could meet all the wages and bills to continue to exist.

One young man went to work for me in March 1959, within a week after I went into business, and retired two years ago. Another young man got out of the U.S. Army and, in 1962, came to me for a job. He wanted to learn how to be a mechanic, so I hired him and my lead mechanic taught him all about (it), which, in the 1960s, was pretty simple. He has grown up with all the new electronic phase of cars as well as the new computer era pertaining to the repair of the new and complex automobile. He tells me he plans to retire in three years or so. His knowledge will be really missed.

Also about 1962, a young man moved into the Condon Air Base,

continued on page 2

City of Heppner proposes water rate increase

The city of Heppner is proposing to increase water rates to provide for the cost of operating and maintaining the water system.

Presently, there are not sufficient funds to adequately maintain and upgrade the old deteriorating system, according to Heppner City manager Jerry Breazeale.

The city proposes to raise the charge for usage in excess of 1,000 gallons. The base rate of \$11.75 would remain. Currently the city charges 50 cents per 1,000 gallons for the first 2,000 gallons over the first 1,000. The next 5,000 gallons is charged

at 25 cents per 1,000 gallons. Any usage above 5,000 gallons is charged at 40 cents per 1,000 gallons.

As proposed, water usage above the minimum 1,000 gallons would be billed at a rate of 80 cents per thousand gallons. For a customer with a summer usage of 21,000 gallons, the bill would increase by \$8.55.

According to Breazeale, the rate increase is needed to cover the costs of operating and repairing the water system. The water system is currently operating at capacity during the summer months and improvements to the system are needed. Raising the rates for

excess usage should help to promote water conservation which will help delay the need to increase supply, Breazeale said. The additional funds received will be used to upgrade the quality of the current system.

The city has not raised water rates since 1994, despite increased costs due to inflation, he said. A survey of water rates in the area indicates that the average rate for water usage in excess of the base 1,000 gallons, is 82 cents per 1,000 gallons.

The city council will consider the rate increase at their May 10 1999 council meeting to be held at 7 p.m. at city hall at 188 NW Willow.

Bike-a-thon to raise funds for St. Jude

The annual St. Jude Bike-a-Thon is scheduled for this Sunday, April 25, with registration to begin at noon near the Ione Fire Hall.

Two courses are available. A one-mile circuit route within the city limits of Ione is designed for younger riders or those wishing to walk or rollerblade.

The 22-mile scenic trip between Ruggs and Ione is set up for older bikers who are up to a more challenging ride. Participants may register at either site. Transportation to Ruggs will be available for bikes and riders and will leave Ione at approximately 12:30 p.m. The ride will start at 1 p.m. at both locations.

All riders are reminded that helmets are required gear for this or any other bike ride.

Parents and volunteers will monitor and provide support to riders on the Ruggs route. Walkers and bike riders will monitor the group in town. Volunteer helpers are welcome and very much appreciated, said Anne Morter, ride coordinator.

All riders will finish at the Ione City Park where photographs will be taken and refreshments

served. Hot dogs will be sold at the conclusion of the race with proceeds going to St. Jude Hospital.

Collection envelopes may be picked up at the conclusion of the ride. Riders are reminded that those collecting \$35 or more in pledges earn a special edition T-shirt. Those collecting \$75 or more earn a sports bag and T-shirt or a sweatshirt. The rider collecting the most pledge money over \$100 wins a dual-cassette jam box.

The St. Jude Bike-a-Thon raises funds for the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in

Memphis, TN. St. Jude is the largest childhood cancer research and treatment center in the country in terms of the number of patients treated and treatment success. The hospital was founded in 1962 by Danny Thomas and operates primarily from public support. Treatments is provided at no cost to the family and all findings are shared freely with doctors and hospitals all over the world, according to a news release.

Pledge sheets are still available at local businesses. For more information, contact Anne Morter, 422-7429.

NAFTA could benefit laid off Kinzua workers

The U.S. Department of Labor has certified approximately 165 workers from Kinzua Resources, L.L.C., Heppner mill, as eligible to apply for assistance and benefits under the Trade Act of 1974 and under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) transitional adjustment assistance program (TAA), according to a U.S. Department of Labor news release.

The certifications cover the period from January 28, 1998, to April 4, 2001, and could provide extra benefits to approximately 165 workers if they are laid off or reduced to part-time work. One hundred-forty-five workers have been laid off so far.

The affected workers manufactured dimension lumber. The Labor Department found the company's customers have increased their reliance on imports of dimension lumber and this has adversely impacted sales, production and employment at Kinzua Resources Heppner mill. According to the Labor Department's certifications, the workers are eligible to apply for TAA and NAFTA-TAA assistance if they are laid off between January 28, 1998, and April 4, 2001.

The transitional adjustment assistance program is authorized by the North American Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act. The program became effective Jan. 1,

1994, and covers workers laid off or forced to work part-time because of increased imports from Mexico or Canada or shifts in production to those countries.

Under the program, a group of three or more employees who believe they are affected by imports from Mexico or Canada can petition the governor of their state for assistance. A union or company official or an authorized community-based organization can also petition on behalf of a firm's workers.

Petitions are available from state employment service offices or other officials designated by the governor. Based on the petitions, the Labor Department investigates to confirm whether workers were adversely affected by increased Mexican or Canadian imports or by transfer of production to those countries.

After they are certified eligible, workers may apply for benefits at a state employment service office. They may receive a broad range of re-employment and re-training services, including career counseling, job placement assistance, job search and relocation allowances, income support during long-term training and support services such as child care and transportation assistance.

Benefits are administered by the Employment Department, State of Oregon, with funds provided by the federal government.

Heppner High prom Saturday

The Heppner High School Junior-Senior prom will be held this Saturday, April 24, from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the Heppner Junior High School gym.

The theme is "Enchantment Under the Sea."

Public viewing and crowning of the king and queen will be at

10 p.m.

The 1999 prom court includes: Jill Barber, Brooke Boyer, Janelle Healy, Jaci Hughes, Amber Peck, Bobbie Rankin, Brooke Sweeney and Julie Watkins; David Bates, Jared Eckman, Tim Dickenson, Casey Evans, Derek Gunderson, Shane Matheny and Elliott Strouse.

Winters makes hole-in-one

Travis Winters, a senior at Heppner High School, made a hole in one at the Willow Creek Country Club during a high school golf meet on April 13.

According to Luvilla Sonstegard of WCCC, Winters made the hole in one, his first, on hole number 14.

Teams participating in the

Advertising Deadline
12 noon Tuesday

HI QUAL POLY WATER TROUGHS

15% OFF

55 gallon • 100 gallon • 155 gallon • 300 gallon

Sale through April 30th

MORROW COUNTY GRAIN GROWERS

Lexington 989-8221 • 1-800-452-7396 For farm equipment, visit our web site at www.mcgg.net